

# CHOW

Community Homemade Options for Wellness



Activities and resources that build healthy eating and active lifestyles.

Washington State Department of Early Learning 2006  
State ECEAP Office

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## What is the Basic Food Nutrition Education Program?

Washington State's Basic Food Nutrition Education Program (BFNEP) was previously known as the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program. BFNEP's goal is to provide information to help Basic Food Program recipients (Food Stamp recipients) make healthy food choices and choose active lifestyles, consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid. BFNEP is partially funded by the United States Department of Agriculture.

### How is nutrition education provided to Basic Food Program Recipients in ECEAP?

DEL, through an interagency agreement with Department of Health, provides administrative oversight, working closely with local programs to design enhanced nutrition education activities that fit the needs of families and their children enrolled in ECEAP.



Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program contractors provide some nutrition education services to eligible ECEAP families and community members. BFNEP funding allows contractors to offer enhanced nutrition education services. ECEAP programs offer two new nutrition education activities as a result of BFNEP funding: FEAST (Families Eating and Actively Sharing Together) and CHOW (Community Homemade Options for Wellness).

### Like More Information?

#### Contact:

Shannon Blood at [shannon.blood@del.wa.gov](mailto:shannon.blood@del.wa.gov) or Judy King at [judy.king@del.wa.gov](mailto:judy.king@del.wa.gov)

Or go on-line at:

[http://www.del.wa.gov/eceap/food\\_nutrition.shtml](http://www.del.wa.gov/eceap/food_nutrition.shtml)



# CHOW Cookbook

Community Homemade Options for Wellness

*An empowerment project for parents and caregivers to develop skills in nutrition and health, leadership, peer education, and community building.*

## **The CHOW Cookbook Project**

- Focuses on parent leadership, involving a team of 6-8 parents working within their community.
- Builds knowledge and skills in nutrition and health, family literacy, and community outreach.
- Encourages parents to build job skills through an engaging nutrition education project.
- Offers staff a step-by-step guide to support family nutrition and health skills through a strengths-based model.

## **Programs Need**

- Staff interested in mentoring parents through the development and distribution of the cookbook.
- Parents interested in connecting with other parents to strengthen healthy eating in their community.
- A meeting place for parents with access to computer and other office equipment.
- Program support for reaching out to Basic Food eligible families with nutrition education opportunities through BFNEP.

## **The Result?**

- Increased knowledge of healthy meal planning and nutrition for families.
- Families communicate important messages about nutrition and health to peers.
- Locally designed CHOW Cookbooks distributed to families in your program.

# Key Messages



5-A-Day

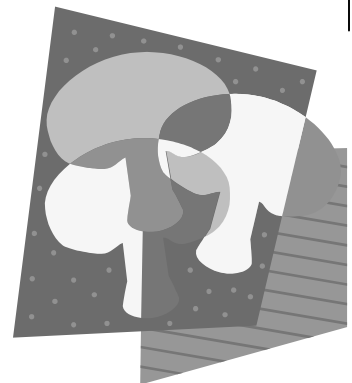


Daily Physical  
Activity

# CHOW: Community Homemade Options for Wellness

An empowerment project for parents and caregivers to develop skills in nutrition and health, peer leadership, peer education, and community building.

- Why CHOW?
- Background
- Project Structure
- CHOW Project Requirements
- Timeline
- Stages:
  - Stage1: Outreach
  - Stage 2: Teaming and Planning
  - Stage 3: Cookbook Building
  - Stage 4: Community Sharing



# BACKGROUND

CHOW (Community Homemade Options for Wellness) encourages parents and caregivers of children enrolled in ECEAP to explore healthy eating and physical activity. As a parent empowerment project, teams of parents explore key health messages, learn side by side with each other, and mentor other families in nutrition and health by:

- Planning the project.
- Designing a community cookbook.
- Publishing and sharing the cookbook in the broader ECEAP community through teachbacks and community gatherings.

CHOW offers families a safe forum in which to explore making healthy food choices and choosing active lifestyles. As part of a CHOW team, parents and caregivers find support in building positive health practices: for themselves, their families, and in the wider community.

## WHY CHOW?

### Families as Community Resources

CHOW builds on research that suggests families make changes based on their experiences and personal investment. Using **family support principles**, the CHOW project recognizes families as resources to their communities. Parents work as a team to plan, develop, and share a community cookbook. ECEAP staff serves as “Guides by the Side” in the CHOW project, facilitating the parent team in the development of nutrition and physical activity messages, and designing the community cookbook.

### Healthy Communities Supporting Healthy Families

CHOW also uses **social support** as a method for building healthy behaviors among families. Research shows that families who receive support from others are more likely to make behavior changes or maintain new healthy behaviors. CHOW teams work together and support each other, as well as encouraging a broader group of their peers in building healthy lifestyles.

## Healthy Families Guiding Other Families

CHOW activities include a **peer health education approach**. CHOW team members engage other parents and caregivers in their community in developing the CHOW cookbook. Parents on the CHOW team put together messages about nutrition and health using their experience and first hand knowledge of their families. Team members share the cookbooks and key nutrition messages through local activities they determine most beneficial for peers in the ECEAP community. Peer education activities might include:

- newsletter or stories about healthy families
- bulletin board displays
- one-on-one contact with parents
- food demonstration sessions
- community events (health fairs, program presentations)

The emphasis is on parents sharing with other parents by offering fun, creative ideas that encourage families to eat healthy and be physically active.



## CHOW PROJECT STRUCTURE

CHOW teams of parents and caregivers work with local program staff to design their community cookbook. This curriculum suggests outreach steps, planning, development and distribution of the CHOW cookbook. An important part for the CHOW team is taking the opportunity to share their cookbooks with other families and their community.

CHOW has four stages:

- Stage 1: Outreach
- Stage 2: Teaming and Planning
- Stage 3: Cookbook Building
- Stage 4: Community Sharing

# CHOW Timeline

The timeline suggestions are meant to guide you in planning for your project. You may alter them depending on specific interests and needs in your program.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
<b>Stage 1:</b> Outreach	Recruit interested parents for CHOW team, and make program arrangements.	Allow about 4 weeks for this phase.
<b>Stage 2:</b> Teaming and Planning	Develop team agreements, review health and nutrition materials, choose key messages, and plan the cookbook.	Allow about two months for this phase.
<b>Stage 3:</b> Cookbook Building	Gather recipes and ideas from parents/caregivers, arrange layout and design, plan for printing/production and distribution.	Allow 2-3 months for this phase.
<b>Stage 4:</b> Share in the Community	Distribute cookbooks and perform other peer education activities.	Usually this includes an end-of-the-year celebration coupled with peer education. Some experienced CHOW teams offer peer education throughout the cycle, to both adults and children.



## Stage 1: Outreach

The first activity for the CHOW project is to let folks in your program know what the project is, identify parents who want to participate in the CHOW team, and to make arrangements necessary to support the work of the CHOW team.

### Staff Activities

- ❖ Share information on CHOW with families in your program (newsletter, bulletin boards, program activities, one-on-one conversations).
- ❖ Present CHOW to Policy Council and Health Advisory Committee (for programs with parent governance structures).
- ❖ Identify community partners for project.
- ❖ Recruit 6-8 parents or caregivers for CHOW team. See Recruitment Tips, p. 10.
- ❖ Make arrangements for CHOW Team including:
  - Meeting logistics (dates, room)
  - Travel (mileage for parents is reimbursable)
  - Childcare arrangement (childcare costs for the CHOW team is an allowable cost)
- ❖ Plan and prepare materials for initial team meetings.
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_

# CHOW Team Recruitment Tips

- Invite parents interested in health and nutrition.
- Advertise the team as an opportunity for leadership and fun.

Team member traits to look for:

- Flexibility
  - Willingness to learn
  - Good communication skills
  - Self-confidence or interest in building confidence
  - Mutual respect for families
  - Openness to new ideas
- Consider how the project might assist parents in meeting personal goals. For example: workplace readiness, leadership, building community connections.
  - Develop a team with parents that are representative of families in your program. Consider all caregivers (moms, dad, kinship care providers and others), and parents at different stages of nutrition and physical activity behaviors.
  - Ask parents and program staff for families that might be interested.
  - If you have more than 6-8 parents interested in participating make sure they know that families will have other ways to contribute to the cookbook (giving recipes or physical activity ideas, submitting children's artwork, making bulletin boards).

# What is C.H.O.W.?

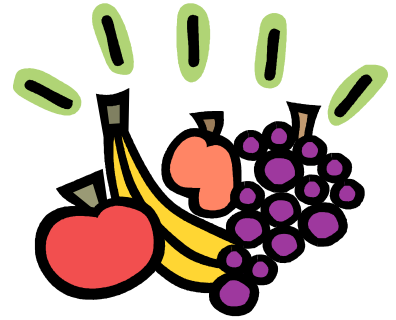
ECEAP families and staff that CHOW work side-by-side to make community cookbooks.



Teams decide how to share eating more colorful fruits and vegetables, and ways to find more fun physical activity. Teams invite other families to share recipes and ideas, too. Teams create cookbooks that work best for their community and complete their project by sharing the cookbooks with other ECEAP families and community members.

## ¿Qué es C.H.O.W.?

Las familias de ECEAP y el personal que “CHOW” trabajan juntos para hacer recetarios comunitarios.



Los equipos deciden como compartir el comer frutas y verduras más coloridas, cada día y formas de descubrir actividades físicas más divertidas. Los equipos invitan a otras familias para compartir recetas e ideas. Los equipos desarrollan recetarios que trabajan mejor para su comunidad y completan su proyecto compartiendo los recetarios con otras familias de ECEAP y miembros de la comunidad.

## Stage 2: Teaming and Planning

During Stage 2 the team establishes guidelines for working together. The CHOW team reviews health and nutrition materials to decide on key messages, and develops a plan for the project.

### Staff Activities

- ❖ Organize logistics for CHOW Team meetings.
- ❖ Create agenda and plan activities for initial CHOW team meeting.
- ❖ Work with team members to gather nutrition and physical activity materials for CHOW team to review.
- ❖ Encourage parents to access web-based materials, providing access if possible.
- ❖ Encourage parent leadership and decision-making during team meetings.

STAFF ROLE: Facilitator or “Guide by the Side”

### Parent Activities

- ❖ Meet other parents/caregivers on CHOW team.
- ❖ Decide how to work together as team.
- ❖ Agreements, timelines, decision-making, roles.
- ❖ Review and research nutrition materials.
- ❖ Decide ‘key messages’ to share with families.
- ❖ Decide what kind of CHOW cookbook to make.
- ❖ Plan and assign tasks to build the cookbook.

# Icebreakers

To start each meeting you may want to include a fun ice-breaker. The goal is to help parents feel comfortable, start creative thinking and explore the area of nutrition and health.

## ☐ A. Fruit-i-ness

Ask parents to select a fruit from a basket. Each person shares two characteristics they have in common with the fruit or vegetable selected. The CHOW staff can model this by taking the first turn. For example, "I am like an orange. You see one thing on the outside- - but there is something very different inside."

## ☐ B. That's Me

Asks participants to stand up and yell 'that's me' when they hear a statement that is true for them. For example, how many of you

- Love to eat
- Do not like to wash dishes
- Feel energetic in the morning
- Have never seen a rutabaga before
- Do something nice for yourself at least once a week
- Get tired of eating the same meals

## ☐ C. Group Juggling

Team members toss soft bean bags as a way to learn names or other fun info about folks. The activity can be expanded to include a variety of items being tossed to make it more challenging.

See instructions: <http://www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/GroupJuggle.html>

## ☐ D. Warp Speed

Similar to Group Juggling, this activity gets a team to work together with a speedy twist to the juggling activity.

See instructions:

<http://www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/WarpSpeed.html>

## ☐ E. Balloons Galore

Prep: Each team member blows up a medium-sized balloon and uses a permanent marker to write or draw something on the balloon they do to keep their family healthy. Parents do many things to help their families stay healthy. Members can share what they wrote on their balloon. Note that as a team they will build on those strengths.

Play: At the count of three all team members throw their balloons into the air. Working as a team, they keep them all up in the air. After the Balloon Toss, ask:

- How were team members able to keep the balloons up in the air?
- How did you work together to be successful?

# Teamwork

Teamwork is a key component to CHOW. The list below contains many activities that help build a sense of teamwork, and reflect on the skills needed in this delicate process of working together.

## ☐ A. Brainstorm: What makes a strong team?

Ask the CHOW team to identify a sport they enjoy playing or watching. Ask them to brainstorm 10 things that make that sport a favorite. Record the ideas on easel paper. When completed, ask the CHOW team if the list works when you ask the question, "Do these characteristics fit for a successful CHOW team?" Highlight with color the key words that describe a successful CHOW team.

## ☐ B. Setting Ground Rules -- or Team Agreements

Ask the group how they want to work together. Suggest they develop ground rules or guidelines. Remind them that the goal is a safe, positive environment for learning and working. Recognize that ground rules are influenced by individual and cultural factors. Use questions or prompts if necessary.

*How will we make sure everyone can participate?*

listening, respect each other, all opinions okay, no put-downs, support and encourage team members

*How do we make decisions?*

majority rules or everyone has to be okay with it

*How will we meet our goals?*

everyone helps, attend meetings, complete tasks, ask for help if needed, have fun

After brainstorming, combine items on the list to make it short and understandable. Four or five simple ground rules work best. Ask participants if they agree with the list. Post the list and refer to it as the team works together.

## ☐ C. Team Spirit

Offer an opportunity for the team to work together on a silly task. For example, ask participants to form the letters C.H.O.W. using their bodies. Reinforce the positive communication and teamwork demonstrated.

## ☐ D. Teamwork Quotes

Sometimes a visual reminder of what it takes to work together offers new insight and perspective. Consider posting quotes or pictures on the wall, offer a time for reflection in the CHOW Parent Log, or sharing quotes as you see fit. Include quotes or wisdom shared by families from different languages and cultural traditions.

Sample Quotes:

- ◆ There is no "I" in "TEAMWORK".
- ◆ A successful team is a group of many hands but of one mind.
- ◆ A job worth doing is worth doing together.
- ◆ Teamwork: Simply stated, it is less me and more we.
- ◆ None of us is as smart as all of us.
- ◆ TEAM = Together Everyone Achieves More
- ◆ It is amazing how much you can accomplish when it doesn't matter who gets the credit.
- ◆ Teamwork is working together — even when apart.



# Messages That Matter

In the CHOW project, parents and caregivers on the team determine the **key messages** they want to share with other families. There are a variety of ways teams can do this. The list below provides activity choices. Determine what kind of materials and message review process works best. Throughout the CHOW project, encourage the CHOW team to choose messages they think will have a positive impact on families.

Remember! Parents are the decision-makers and creators of the cookbook. Staff continue their role as “Guide by the Side and support the process.

## ☐ A. Gallery of Materials

The CHOW team reviews a variety of nutrition and physical activity messages in fliers, parent handouts, and other health and nutrition resources. The materials reviewed should be “family-friendly” materials designed for parents. The CHOW staff assists in gathering materials. Parents can bring in things they have collected from sources such as WIC, parent education groups, magazines, etc.

**Reminder: Too much information can be overwhelming. Keep it simple, and allow parents to be the consumers.**

You can invite parents to look over nutrition handouts as a group. Parents identify the key message and talk through how that message would be received by families in their community. Encourage families to critically analyze the messages for clarity, usefulness, and tone. Or you can invite parents to select a few materials they are interested in to take home to review before the next CHOW team meeting. See ideas for where to find nutrition information on p. 20 and Materials Review cards on p. 21.

Remember! In Washington State, we are focusing on two key messages:

***Eat five or more fruits and vegetables every day.***

***Get daily moderate physical activity.***

☐ B. Pictures are Worth a Thousand Words

Images also communicate messages. Invite parents to look at images to determine what best supports families in building positive health practices. For example, does the common logo of a fruit and vegetable basket have meaning for families? Does it communicate the 5-A-Day message well? Parents who are non-readers can also participate in determining appropriate messages by exploring images and symbols.

☐ C. Behavior Change

An important part of the CHOW project is to encourage families to maintain or build on positive health practices, as well as nudge families to think about new options, try new things, and judge the merits for themselves.

Consider sharing the Behavior Change Model with your team by sharing a personal anecdote that is comfortable. Remember -- the more honest we are with parents about the behavior change process, the more creative they can be in developing strategies to support families in multiple stages.

☐ D. Surveying

Parents might want to send their favorite messages out to other families for input. It is similar to what advertisers do when they are selling a product. First, they determine who the potential audience is. Next they try out their ideas and 'jingles' on that audience.

In this short time frame, parents could decide to each talk to three other parents to get their feedback on messages.

☐ E. Sticker Voting

After the team has proposed nutrition and health messages that they are interested in relaying to parents in their program, you can help them prioritize by "dot" voting.

Give each team member 3-5 stickers. By placing the stickers on messages they support the group can pare down the messages to the winners of the sticker vote. Encourage parents to select 2-3 key messages for this project, keeping in mind that they can communicate other messages in the future.

## ☐ F. Encouragement is Worth a Thousand Words

A quick discussion on what helps them when they try something new is a great stepping stone for keeping the CHOW cookbook strength-based. A fun way to work this through is to use a plate of some food that parents might think is strange. Demonstrate tactics with a volunteer parent. Some suggested responses:

"You should eat this . . . the research says it's good for you"

"Taste this or you can't go to the movies this week."

"Here, taste this (forcing spoon near face)."

"It's not as bad as you think."

"Let me know what you think."

"I was feeling adventurous today and was wondering if you were too?"

"Let me know if you think this would taste better with bread or some carrots and celery."

"It doesn't look like you are feeling adventurous today. I bet you have found some other healthy snack that is yummy."

## ☐ G. What's Our Jingle?

Write the definition of jingle on an easel. *Jin-gle: a catchy tune or verse, usually one that is played repeatedly to advertise something.* As a group think of (or sing) popular jingles in the media (catchy advertisements on radio or television).

Parents create their own message "jingle" for their cookbook. For example, "Broccoli for Breakfast!" One program decided that they wanted to catch the attention of families. The cookbook had funny drawing of broccoli trees next to healthy muffins on a beach. Parents had great fun putting together a cookbook with humor.

## ☐ H. Searching the Electronic World

Offer computer time, assisting parents with searching for interesting materials available on line. Some websites to explore:

- Food Stamp Nutrition Connection  
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodstamp/index.html>
- Eat Smart. Play Hard.  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/>
- WIC Works Resource System  
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Topics/index.html>

- Team Nutrition  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/index.htm>
- Nutrition Education for New Americans  
<http://monarch.gsu.edu/multiculturalhealth>
- American Heart Association  
<http://americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200000>
- Dole 5 A Day  
[http://dole5aday.com/Media/M\\_Home.jsp](http://dole5aday.com/Media/M_Home.jsp)
- Action for Healthy Kids  
<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/>
- Fit and Active Kids  
<http://fitness.gov/funfit/funfit.html>
- California Five a Day  
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/cdic/cpns/ca5aday/default.htm>

**Other Ideas for Finding Nutrition Information Include:**

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[illegible]

Overall rating: 1      2      3      4      5  
Poor                          Excellent

## **Materials Review**

Name of handout or article:

Name of Reviewer:

Nutrition or health message:

What I like about the message:

The message could be improved by . . . . .

Overall rating: 1	2	3	4	5
Poor				Excellent

Overall rating: 1 2 3 4 5  
Poor Excellent

[illegible]

Overall rating: 1 2 3 4 5  
Poor Excellent

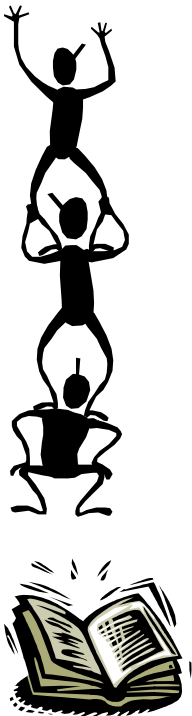
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Overall rating: 1 2 3 4 5  
Poor Excellent

# Key Messages

- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_

# Messengers



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# CHOW Cookbook Planning

The CHOW team decides what kind of cookbook they want to make. A simplified Action Plan can help break down the tasks into manageable pieces. Here is a suggested action plan:

What will be in our cookbook?

What key messages will we share?

How will we involve ECEAP families in the cookbook process?

## Action Plan

Tasks/Jobs	Who?	When?	Resources Needed	

Ideas for Sharing our Cookbook and Message



## Stage 3: Cookbook Building

During Stage 3 the team builds the cookbook. This involves gathering recipes from families, integrating nutrition messages, developing a plan for design and layout, and getting organized for the printing of cookbooks. The staff supports the parent-directed effort through encouragement, troubleshooting and programs support.

### Staff Activities

- ❖ Encourage parents as they work, keep them focused on Action Plan.
- ❖ Facilitate meetings and frequent check-ins.
- ❖ Provide program support as needed (computer usage, copy machines, food for demonstrations).
- ❖ Monitor and guide budget for project.
- ❖ Finalize printing arrangements.

STAFF ROLE: Facilitator or “Guide by the Side”

### Parent Activities

- ❖ Gather recipes from families in the program.
- ❖ Provide fun nutrition information for families.
- ❖ Design and organize cookbook, including layout and art.
- ❖ Develop plan for printing and distribution of cookbook.

## Stage 4: Share the Cookbook

The final activity of the CHOW project is sharing the cookbook. During Stage 4, the CHOW team shares the cookbook with other families in their community. Parents on the CHOW team use their leadership skills, knowledge about health and nutrition, and communication skills to promote positive health practices. The CHOW team decides whether to do group or individual “teach-backs”, taste-testing booths, meet and greet group events, or classroom visits.

For ECEAP Providers: Primary distribution of the cookbooks should be to ECEAP families. Other families below 185% FPL (Head Start families, WorkFirst participants, and recipients of childcare or housing subsidies) can also be included in the distribution plan. Your budget and ability to reproduce the cookbooks also influences the distribution plan.

### Staff Activities

- ❖ Assist in arranging for cookbook distribution.
- ❖ Work with team on “teachback” activities, presentations, or other peer education options.
- ❖ Gather and report data on outreach activities and team member activities (CHOW logs) for ECEAP providers.
- ❖ Provide input on future BFNEP parent empowerment activities.

ROLE: Facilitator or “Guide by the Side”

### Parent Activities

- ❖ Identify strategies for sharing nutrition and health messages with other families.
- ❖ Participate in sharing CHOW project with other families.
- ❖ Reflect on personal growth. Participate in feedback and evaluation process.

These materials were developed through federal funds from the USDA Basic Food Program and the state of Washington's Department Early Learning.

The Basic Food Nutrition and Education Plan (BFNEP) for Washington State can help qualifying families secure nutrition assistance and education.

For more information, call: 1-877-980-9220  
or on-line at: [https://www2.wa.gov/dshs/onlineapp/introduction\\_1.asp](https://www2.wa.gov/dshs/onlineapp/introduction_1.asp)

